natural plague bacterium but one mutated in some germ warfare laboratory;

(b) whether it is also a fact that a fortnight after the outbreak of the plague in Surat, "The Week" magazine had reported that it was a result of biological warfare experiments conducted by the United States which has been confirmed by American, French and Russian scientists and endorsed by experts in the Indian Government; and

(c) if so, the details thereof and what is Government's reaction thereto?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF HEALTH AND FAMILY WELFARE (DR. C. SILVERA): (a) Laboratory analysis has revealed that the plague isolates from Surat are different from old Indian isolates and do not bear similarity with representative strains examined from various geographical regions of world.

(b) and (c) Such a report appeared in "The Week'. There is no authentic information in this regard.

Expansion programme of Khadi and Village Industries

1711. SHRI RAHASBIHARI BARIK: Will the Minister of INDUSTRY be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government have a proposal to generate additional employment through various expansion programmes of Khadi and Village Industries;

(b) if so, the details of the programme drawn up by the Government in that regard for Eighth and Ninth Plan;

(c) the details of funds earmarked for Khadi and Village Industries Commission for the purpose; and

(d) the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF INDUSTRY (SHRI M. ARUNACHALAM): (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) Apart from normal programme of implementation of Khadi (Cotton, Woollen, Silk and muslin) and 96 village industries, KVIC has designed scheme to provide additional employment through special projects, District Special programme, 125 Block programmes. Under district special employment programme 50 districts are to be covered during 8th plan under which it is expected to provide employment to 10,000 persons in each district. 16 districts have been selected for launching the programme and implementation has already started in 14 districts. Under the 125 block employment programme it is expected to provide employment to 1000 persons in each block. This programme has already been started in 122 RPDS blocks. The total employment under 125 block programme is estimated to be 1.25 lakhs by the end of 8th plan and under district programme the expected employment opportunities would be 5 lakhs during the same period.

(c) and (d) For the year 1995-96 in addition to normal budget allocation to KHADI & VILLAGE INDUSTRIES COMMISSION, Government of India has allocated Rs. 130.00 crores under rural employment generation programme for implementation of the recommendation of the High Power Committee. Out of this Government has already released Rs. 65.00 crores.

Expert Committee to tackle Malaria

1712. SHRI GUNDAPPA KORWAR: Will the Minister of HEALTH AND FAMILY WELFARE be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government have constituted any Expert Committee to tackle malaria;